2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

they only eat pumpkin leaves', i.e. where game is short and the people have to rely on vegetable relishes. They refer to a visit to a village on a big river as, 'He has gone to eat fish with So-and-So.' The fortunes of each district are discussed year by year and villages described as 'with hunger' (*pa nsala*) or the converse, 'with beer' (*pa bwalua*), i.e. with so much grain that they can make beer frequently. The seasonal changes in food, and the stages in its production, give their names to the periods of the year. While a definite calendar of moons exists (cf. Chap. XVIII) the Bemba more often time events as having taken place 'in the hunger months', i.e. the last months of the rains when the millet supply is low; or 'when we were eating mushrooms', 'when the *mupundu* fruit was ripe', and 'when we were reaping, sowing', &c., and the ages of babies are usually reckoned by dating their births in this manner.

The position of the Bemba traveller, dependent as he is on the hazards of hospitality, provides a further element of uncertainty. The correct greeting to one who has returned from a journey is *Mwalyeni bwino*, 'Have you eaten well?' To which the courteous reply is *Kulila mulelya*, 'Provided you have eaten well yourself', or *E Mukwai kufiparishya*, 'Yes, sir, I eat everything up completely', or else *Fia kwa cilime bafipwa kano wa kulapo panda*, 'It would have been impossible to finish up all the crops unless you had built a house alongside', i.e. it was so plentiful. There is a regular form of magic used to ensure a guest's arrival before a meal has been finished and not after. A knot tied in the grass with the right formula repeated will secure this result, and I found my staff even performed this rite on my own behalf if at all doubtful as to my reception on a visit to unknown English hosts.

Besides this direct interest in the food he is going to eat in the day, or the beer he may have the luck to come in time for, the secondary values acquired by food give it an added emotional interest to the Bemba. It must be remembered that there is no other way of accumulating wealth in this area except by acquiring sufficient food to feed many followers. The giving or receipt of food is a part of most economic transactions, and may come to represent a number of human relationships whether between different kinsmen or between subject and chief. For this reason the whole question of handling or dividing food acquires tremendous emotional significance for the native, and discussions of personalities or legal relationships tend to be ultimately expressed in this

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

273 is regarded with a kind of laughing tolerance or envy and, as
733 will be seen, the tribal drinking customs make it impossible for any one except a chief to become a regular drunkard. A commoner may brew beer more often than his fellows, or feel its effect quicker, but it is difficult for him actually to get much more to drink than they do. In any case, the drunkard is regarded generally as an irresponsible individual, and of anybody who commits adultery or assault when under the influence of drink, the phrase 'an affair of beer' (*umulandu ua bwalua*) is used quite tolerantly.

273 Some of the deleterious effects of alcohol are recognized. I never heard any complaints or jokes about double vision made, but have several times seen natives refuse to go out tree-cutting the morning after a beer-drink because of 'beer before the eyes' (*ubwalua pa menso*), meaning, I think, fear of giddiness or lack of co-ordination. Headaches are quite common the day after a big beer party. To the European, the remarkable thing about native drinking is the speed with which the people seem to get excited and garrulous. The percentage of alcohol is probably rarely more than 4 per cent., and many of the company get very little to drink during an evening. But it must be remembered that the *ubwalua* is drunk hot which may increase its potency, and also that it is drunk very much less regularly than in this country. The Paramount Chief
643 told me that a great ruler should drink beer every day without
273 exception. Otherwise, if he drank only once or twice a week, he would become drunk like a commoner and stagger about and give bad judgements in court. 'His chieftainship would suffer' (*ukuti bufumu buonaule*). This was obviously in the nature of a 'rationalization', but it is true that chiefs who drink regularly seem to get bemused, but never violently drunk as commoners occasionally do.

273 But it is probably the fact that beer-drinking is such a social
● 574 event that accounts for the people's quick sense of exhilaration and even intoxication. Natives gather together from surrounding
[521] villages to drink at their relatives' huts and exchange gossip, and this is in itself an interesting occasion in a society in which the local group is so small. Further, beer is drunk by the maximum number of people who can crowd into one hut. At an average brewing three or four calabashes might be available for distribution, and of these one would be given to the headman to share with the elders of the village, another might be given to the son-in-law of the brewer to drink with the younger men of the village, and a

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

third kept in the owner's hut for his near family or special friends. But in each case, after the formal drinking has begun, the original guests are joined by others who enter with a polite salutation, take a short pull at the beer, and stay for a short talk. When there is only one calabash to be divided in the village, each inhabitant will probably join the crowd in the hut at one time or another in the evening. Thus there is a constant coming and going of men and women, and the children who are too small to be left at home. Dancing nearly always accompanies the drinking. In these circumstances it is not surprising that there should be the maximum amount of excitement with the minimum of alcohol consumed. Old women usually drink with the men. It is considered bad form for young girls to do so, and women nursing small children are afraid to join in for fear that the baby might be harmed by contact with a hearth touched by some one ritually impure during the confusion of the evening's drink. Where there is enough beer therefore the women have a calabash of their own.

The guests come together in a condition of pleasurable anticipation. They crowd into a hut about eight feet in diameter and sit huddled on the floor side by side in the closest possible physical contact. The heat is terrific, as the fire is piled high to keep the water boiling and to give light to the company. Sweat pours down naked shoulders. Sometimes singing begins, and the whole company rock to and fro clapping their hands, or they may be wedged still tighter against the wall, and a space cleared for a solo dancer and a couple of big drums. The watchers sway, tap with their feet, and clap the rhythm. At other times the drums stand outside in the village square, and young men and women stream out of the hut to line up for the big round dance—*icila*, or the line dance—the *ngwai*. In these conditions the excitement of social intercourse is probably at least as potent as the influence of alcohol.[1] Real drunkenness, in the form in which we know it, is more often to be found in the modern villages where a man can 'drink alone', or with a few friends and when dancing does not accompany the drinking.

It is difficult to estimate the quantity of beer drunk by the Bemba during a year or an average night. In the harvest months—May to

[1] A compound-manager at Wankie Mine told me that he had found the same amount of intoxication produced among the mine employees at a Christmas beer-drink with an alcohol content of about half that which was usual. He explained it by saying, 'I think they had been expecting to get drunk at Christmas for so long.'

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

273 July or August—I should say that beer was brewed in most villages
433 about once a week. In the subsequent months the supply would be less frequent, and during the scarce season at the end of the rains *ubwalua* would only be found regularly at a chief's court. If asked how often a woman should brew a year, the answer was anything from four to six times, which, reckoning about 80 lb. of millet to one brew, would mean an annual expenditure of about 400 lb. of millet on beer.[1] Ten brews in one year was described to me as excessive,
[438] with the added criticism: 'That is a woman who likes beer.' But there is no doubt that in villages near white settlements, people brew much more often than this because of the profits they hope to make from the sale, and they even buy grain for the purpose.[2]

273 On any one night, the amount drunk per head is limited by the
●574 rules of social etiquette. Under village conditions drinking follows
576 a definite order of precedence. The guests usually arrive between four and five in the afternoon, after the day's work is done. They enter one by one shouting: '*Hodi*?—May I come in?' at the door and crouch on the newly cleaned floor side by side. Water is bubbling in a big pot over the fire in charge of the woman of the house, and the calabash, or sometimes more than one, stands ready on the floor, for water may not be poured on the drink (*ukubiko bwalua*) until the honoured guests are assembled. The owner then rinses out his mouth with water and spits on the ground calling a blessing of the ancestral spirits (*ukupala mate*) for a peaceful beer-drink. He then hands round the drinking reed ceremoniously to the eldest man present, who sucks the first draught, pronounces on the quality of the beer, and hands the reed back to the host. Drinking then follows in order of age and status. The old men near the calabash talk and take long pulls at the *ubwalua* in turn, while the elder women, if present, sit farther off, and rise occasionally to take a couple of drinks and then return to their place. Young

[1] Out of an annual production of roughly 2,400 lb. of grain per family (from U. Moffat's report to the Diet Committee of N. Rhodesia, 1933). It must be remembered, however, that the woman does not usually cook on the same day as she provides beer and that she is brewing for the whole village and not for her household alone.

[2] At Kasaka village during the months succeeding the harvest (1933) out of 11 women, 3 had brewed once; 2 twice; 2 three times, 2 four times, 1 five times, and 1 six times. In the figures collected by Mrs. Gore-Browne 15 villages had brewed on an average 10 times each in 6 months from June to January, using 9,400 lb. of millet, but figures are difficult to verify and the prohibition on the sale of beer makes women reluctant to tell the truth on this point.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

men come up to the pot later and kneel to take a short draught, usually in silence. Boys might be invited to take a drink as a joke by one of their elders, but they would never stay in the hut all the evening. Young girls chiefly drink at special women's beer-drinks, but on a general occasion they sometimes sit outside in groups of four or five and dare each other to go in to the drinking hut, with much giggling and jokes. I never saw them stay more than about a quarter of an hour. But all such additions to the circle take place later in the evening when the beer is already weak. It is clear in fact that with the formality practised under village conditions, the bulk of the three or four calabashes brewed at one go (*amatimba*) is distributed through the whole community but that the elder men and women have the largest proportion of this supply, the young men a smaller share, and the young women and boys an occasional drink in between dancing. Thus it might be estimated that the average consumption on any one night would be somewhere near 1½ pints per head for an older man or woman, 1 pint for a younger, and about ½ for a young girl.

Under modern conditions these rules of etiquette are often broken. There is apparently little obligation to share beer that is bought with money, and even when the owner has brewed her own supply there is a tendency for it to be shared with four or five people only, or even for it to be drunk alone. In such cases natives will start drinking in the morning and sit at it all day. The formalities of polite invitation and the order of drinking all go by the board, and in the circle of villages round a town like Kasama it would be fair to say that a large proportion of the younger men are regularly drunk every Saturday and Sunday in a way that is quite unlike the slight intoxication of an ordinary village beer-drink. On the other hand, in one or two modern communities, i.e. those on the grounds of some of the protestant missions or in the near neighbourhood, a large percentage of teetotallers is common, since the pledge is taken by many church members. But at present no other substitute form of entertainment seems to have been discovered for the Bemba, since tea is a prohibitive price in this area and the various non-alcoholic drinks made of millet, such as have been issued from time to time by different mining companies, are not commonly made. The drinking of beer, therefore, besides providing a valuable addition to a poor diet, continues to be essential to a normal existence in this tribe.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Hence, though the Bemba village is a kinship unit, its composition is by no means rigidly fixed. There are certain main principles of local association, but the practice of temporary matrilocal marriage makes for a good deal of change from one community to another, and the even balance between the powers of the father and those of the maternal uncle allow a man a number of possible allegiances.[1] Admiration for rank, or for wealth under modern conditions, sometimes cut across the principles of kinship, so that men may be found living with more distant rather than nearer relatives. The former have a higher status. Added to all these factors the Bemba are great visitors and from childhood up spend months or even a year or two 'seeing' relatives (*ukumona bantu*) in different parts of the country, and this habit of movement seems definitely part of their social system.[2]

Modern Changes in Village Structure.

In spite of the possible variations in the composition of a Bemba village, it remains a closely knit unit. The pattern of behaviour between the different relatives and the legal obligations that bind them are traditionally fixed. If a man settles down in a community, and builds a hut there, he does so usually as a son-in-law of a man of that village, more rarely as a brother, a maternal nephew, or a maternal grandson, and very occasionally as a son. If a woman leaves her parent's village and joins another community she goes there either as the wife of a man returning to live with his people, or as a deserted or widowed woman taking refuge with the members of her own matrilineal descent group. In either case, the behaviour of each new arrival is fixed, and also their type of economic inter-dependence as will be described in the next chapter. In a modern village there are two marked changes. In the first place these settlements are no longer composed of close relatives of the headman, but consist of a series of small kinship groups —two or three households, a mother and two married daughters,

[1] Compare the much more fixed structure of the village in a matrilineal society where patrilocal marriage is practised, i.e. in Melanesian societies where the boy goes to live with his maternal uncle in adolescence and marries there, or in the composition of the kraal among the strongly patrilocal, patrilineal Bantu societies in South Africa.

[2] Missionaries claim that the building of permanent villages in this area would ease the problem of locating schools. This is true, but it would be unlikely to stop the children of the village being sent to 'see' their grandparents 30–50 miles away for six months at a time.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

CHAPTER IX

HOSPITALITY AND LABOUR PAYMENT

Types of Hospitality.

THIS description of the sharing of supplies between members of the individual family has already shown us the social and symbolic importance of offering and receiving food. Women, we saw, tended to cook dishes for their husbands and sons-in-law even if they went short themselves. They did so because they did not want to lose their self-respect. It is for this reason that the Bemba practice of hospitality affects so largely their consumption of supplies. Their rules in this respect are based on the conception, described in greater detail later, that the distribution of cooked food is an attribute of authority, and therefore prestige, and that its reception puts a man under an obligation to return to the giver respect, service, or reciprocal hospitality. As the Bemba say, 'You have eaten *namba* (the sticky gum from the *munamba* tree) and it sticks to your stomach' (*Ualye namba, yalambatila fye munda*), i.e. you have filled your stomach with food from some one and it puts you under a permanent obligation to him. Hence the act of distribution is valued in itself. The man who kills game at the nets or who brews beer for his friends probably does not eat or drink any more than they do, but he has the satisfaction of being able to act as host. As a corollary, it follows that the highest compliment he can give his guest is to provide him with cooked food or beer, which he in his turn can distribute again. Thus the most honourable form of hospitality is to send a man dishes of porridge and relish, a lump of meat, or a calabash of beer so that he can dispose of it as he pleases in his hut alone. The least honourable is to ask him to share in your dish, in what would seem to us a more friendly and convivial manner. It will be noted how far this people's idea of hospitality differs from our own. In this country, to prepare a meal for a respected relative and to ask him to eat it alone in his room would be a studied insult, much as the idea might appeal to some hostesses. But among the Bemba, hospitality is never an occasion for conversation or recreation, but a way of offering respect, or of providing food for those who cannot get it any other way. To give your elderly uncle a

574 ●

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

●574

basket of porridge to eat behind closed doors means that you consider him as a chief who can eat alone and distribute food as he pleases. He is the owner (*mwine*) of the dish. To ask him to share is to put him on a level with yourself or to treat him as a dependent.

Thus hospitality is perhaps a misleading word for the practices described in this chapter, since it conveys the idea of entertainment and good cheer, whereas, except in the case of beer, the Bemba provision for visitors consists in the division and subdivision of food into portions, to be eaten in a series of separate groups. There is never a big party gathered to eat. The European sometimes congratulates himself on the number of guests he has been able to feed round one table, while the Bemba would be more likely to brag of the number of separate dishes he had been able to provide for his guests. This latter viewpoint makes the exercise of hospitality quite a complex matter, and very much increases the liabilities of the housewife.

As regards travellers, any Bemba who has not adopted European values and standards of living provides food for all those who can claim relationship, real or classificatory, to himself or his wife.[1] Any young male visitor, such as a junior brother of host or hostess, a classificatory brother (*umunyina*), or a cross-cousin (*umufyala*), is usually asked to share in the dish that is sent to the host at the men's *nsaka*. Such a guest would probably already be sitting there with his contemporaries among the villagers, but if not he might be found on the veranda of the hut allotted to him with the air of deliberate detachment thought elegant on such occasions, and would remain there until a child were sent to fetch him to the meal. A more honoured form of hospitality is to send the guest a dish of porridge and relish to the *nsaka* in his own right, so that he is there able to distribute it among those present. A young man who ranks as the child (*umwana*) of host or hostess, or a maternal nephew (*umwipwa*) who is treated with a certain amount of reserve by his *nalume*, a relative by marriage (*bukwe*) who should not eat with the host, or a kinsman occupying a senior position such as father or grandfather by virtue of inheritance would receive hospitality of this sort.[2]

[1] Contact with European conditions of living affects the degree of nearness of kinship recognized.

[2] By the system of inheriting a dead man's name and ancestral spirit (*ukupyamika*) quite a young man may be addressed as grandfather or *nalume*, and hence may have to be treated with more respect than his age would warrant.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

574

Elderly and eminent kinsmen, such as a father or grandfather of host or hostess, or the maternal uncle of either, have to be treated with even greater respect. They eat alone, as has been described. When such a person arrives for a few days' visit, a special hut is cleared for him[1] and dishes are sent him neatly covered, which he eats inside the house, calling a small child, usualiy a grandson, to finish the remains, since an empty platter is a sign of voracity, and is hence *mal-vue*. The manner of bringing the meal is considered specially important. The hostess usually stands at the door of her hut and yells across the village a high-pitched scream of instructions to the child who is carrying the dishes. He is to bring the guest water to wash, to kneel as he hands it, to utter a greeting at the door, and so forth, each sentence ending with that common Bemba phrase *Busaka! Busaka!*—'elegance' expressed in its duplicative form.

The feeding of female visitors is always a less formal affair, since the whole business of cooking and dispatching dishes (*ukutebeta*) is essentially the woman's way of paying compliments to her male relatives and not to her kinswomen. Most female relatives will be called to eat with the hostess and will even have helped with the preparation of the meal. An older woman must, however, be treated with ceremony. Sometimes she may get a separate basket of porridge, and sometimes the whole company moves to eat on her veranda as though the old lady were playing hostess herself. She then becomes the *mwine* of the dish. Members of the husband's family, as distinct from those of the wife, will usually eat alone. In any case, respected women visitors must always be invited to eat with courtesy by a child, who kneels and says, '*Mukwai*, they call you to eat.' Age distinctions are very important here. A young married girl told me she could never just shout to an older woman visitor with, 'Come over here, my friend. Hurry! Come quickly! Hunger is hurting! We are waiting to eat,' as she would to a contemporary. Even a 'modern girl' seems punctilious on such points. There are differences, too, in the rules of division of particular dishes. An eminent person might be asked to come to a young woman's hut if meat were being served, but not if in the case of ordinary food. In the hunger period an old

[1] Less distinguished visitors sleep with their relatives, the sleeping quarters allotted carefully in order to avoid breaking the comprehensive incest taboos and in-law avoidances.

[513]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

574 lady of rank, whom I knew to have eaten little that day, refused an invitation to a meal. She asked me, with a sniff, who they took her for? Was she to cross the village 'just to sit down to a few mushrooms'?

574 622 The hospitality given to travelling chiefs must be reckoned in a different category. At the visit of the *mfumu*, each woman must contribute a little flour, and the headman produce chickens, the gift of honour, and, if possible, beer. But the presentation of the basket of flour and the live fowls is an act of homage, rather than mere provision for the traveller. It is brought by the headman and his elders and offered with the formal salutation of respect (*ukutota panshi*)—clapping and rolling on the back on the ground—and is reckoned as part of the chief's dues as the owner of the land (cf. Chap. XIII). But in any case it would be thought impossible to give a chief cooked food. He could not eat it because porridge cooked on 'impure' fire would endanger his life,[1] and it would be considered, I think, in the nature of an insult. Chiefs visiting each other will exchange uncooked food to be prepared by their respective staffs, but only a chief's head wife could send a royal visitor dishes of porridge and relish. All these distinctions show clearly the extent to which prestige is associated with the right to distribute food rather than its mere possession or consumption, and it is not surprising that the whole etiquette of feeding travellers is considered so important by a people constantly preoccupied with problems of status. Every traveller's departure is followed by lengthy discussions among the women as to what he received and what he ought to have received, and the Bemba proverb, 'Flour which is not yours is ash' (*Bunga ubushili bwenu, mito*), can be well understood.

574 602 609 Finally, there are strangers to be fed. This is an important matter at the present time since many natives, travelling four or five hundred miles up the motor road, are forced to stay *en route* at villages in which they have no close relatives. Hence it is important to discover what the old tradition of hospitality was and whether it is still observed. The correct procedure for a man entering a village is to ground his spear and sit down in silence in the veranda of the nearest hut. He should not speak until one

[1] The chief's wife has to make new fire either by friction or with matches and sometimes to mud the floor freshly before she can prepare his food when in a strange village.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

of the inhabitants comes up and asks him his origin and works out in the interminable African fashion the line of his descent. Then it may become clear whose relative, if anybody's, he is, and therefore whose responsibility. This practice is usually followed still, but the old custom of making a ceremonial obeisance in front of the headman's hut, and thus claiming a meal from him, I only saw once observed. On the motor road hospitality rules are changing. Nearing Kasama I have heard natives coming up from the mines shouting, 'I am dying, I, a member of the such-and-such a clan,' and such an assertion of clan membership would have been enough to ensure a meal formerly. Nowadays this is emphatically not so. Villagers on the motor road would have been eaten out of house and home if they had stuck to the old rules of hospitality. A certain amount of food is actually sold along the route, usually at exorbitant rates, but there is no doubt that men and their families returning from the mines suffer real privation on the way.[1] The obligation to share food with nearer relatives is still observed even in urban districts, but not the wider ties of clan membership.

Permanent or Semi-permanent Visitors.

More permanent hospitality is offered to kinsmen who come to stay for six weeks to some months, either because they are short of supplies, have quarrelled with their relatives at home, are back on holiday from the mines, or because they want to amuse themselves by a change.[2] Women visitors who are near relatives of the wife, whether married or not, are easily incorporated into the women's domestic team. The matrilocal family group is merely extended to include additional real or classificatory mothers, daughters, cross-cousins, or grandchildren. For a short visit a hut will be cleared for them; for a longer stay a new house may be built. If the visitor is a person of status she will be given millet of her own to grind, if possible, since that is the highest compliment. If supplies are shorter, she will have a basket of flour divided out to her, or otherwise she will merely share in the family dish and her husband will eat at the *nsaka*. Usually the arrangement varies, according to conditions, from day to day.

[1] The Compound Manager at Luanshya estimated that a man returning from the mines on foot requires 10*s*. at least to spend on food *en route*.

[2] The former visits take place in the hunger months, January to March, and the latter in the hot season, August to November, when the garden work is done.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

574 602 Grandchildren constantly arrive for long visits at the older couple's huts. Small children at weaning go to sleep with their maternal grandparents; when older they might travel a day or two's journey to stay with their father's people and may remain there for a month or more. Children with parents at the mines are also left very generally with their grandparents, usually maternal, and may live there until they are of marriageable age or after. They become the children of the household and the tie is probably more intimate with grandparents than it is with parents, and is certainly less subject to taboos. Children whose parents live in the village often eat with their grandmother for choice, just as they regularly sleep at her hut.

A housewife may also undertake to feed, temporarily or permanently, certain of her male kinsmen, if they are left widowers or are not yet married. This group includes her younger unmarried brothers and her sons. A son may always return to his mother's village if his wife dies or leaves him and he will be certain of a welcome. Men say that their wives often leave them at a time of famine and go home to their own people, but that a mother would never refuse to cook for her son. 'There is always food with the mother. Even if she has only a few ground-nuts left, she will fry them and give them to you,' a native put it to me. A woman has no legal obligation to feed her married son, since he belongs to his wife's local group, but the emotional attachment continues strong and a son will always be given preference if he returns to his mother's community.[1]

A woman will not regularly feed her father. There is a constrained and respectful attitude between them from the time of the girl's adolescence, but she will send him dishes 'for respect'. Her [603] grandfather, on the other hand, whether paternal or maternal, she is especially bound to look after. A man has technically preemptive rights to marry his granddaughter and often jokingly addresses her as his 'wife' when she is a child, whether he intends to marry her or not, and it is therefore considered fitting that she should feed him in his old age if he is left alone.

[538] [1] Many proverbs contrast the behaviour of the mother with that of other women, e.g. 'Rejoice that your mother is alive, the mother of your friend won't allow her food-rack to be touched.' *Sankata, noko acili pò, noko ua mubio tekatilwa pa luino*, or 'In a village where you have no mother, your work is to beg,' *Mu mushi umushili noko, no kupula, milimo*. Cf. *Dictionnaire Français-Chibemba*, L. Guillerme, 1920.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

A number of the husband's relatives also come on long visits. His male kinsmen, if unmarried or widowed, must be regularly fed by the housewife, who prepares them separate dishes if possible. If married and of junior status their wives will help with the cooking, since there is no strong avoidance between a woman and her husband's brother's wife, who may, in fact, become her co-wife if the former dies. But the female relatives of the husband, his mother and sisters, stand in a rather different category, as has been described, and a widowed or deserted wife who has 'gone to her brother' will work alone with her children and be given food of her own to cook.

In all these different forms of hospitality it will be seen how the giving and receiving of food has acquired symbolic value, and that the difference between cooked and uncooked food, special dishes, or the manner of serving them may indicate distinctions in rank, kinship, or age, and that much of the cooking done by the Bemba housewife is an expression of these various degrees of status.

Division of Meat.

Since meat is a perishable food that must be divided at once, it is natural that its distribution follows different rules. Every bit of the animal is known by name and graded according to its social value, but I did not find that the portions of game to be allotted to different kinsmen were so clearly defined as seems to be so in the case of cattle among a number of the pastoral Bantu. With a big animal the chief should be given tribute of a leg, while the headman of the village has some honoured portion according to convenience. The father-in-law of the hunter, his father, or *nalume*, have also their gift of respect, but the rest of the joints appear to be distributed according to the hunters' inclinations, and I have seen all sorts of portions—hind-leg, foreleg, or back given to these different relatives.

The cattle killed for sacrifice at the chief's court are, however, divided according to very definite rules—often according to the symbolic associations of each part, as for instance the gift of the heart to Citimululu at the slaying of an ox at the founding of his new village. I have taken notes at six such divisions of a beast, but the distribution cannot be understood without a knowledge of the functions of the different dignitaries of the court.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

feared her husband's sister would take the girl's side.[1] Thus the attitudes resulting from the tribal kinship pattern were emphasized by the contrasting personalities of the two women concerned. As a result of this domestic situation NaMarya devoted her time to making beer, which she declared was less trouble than fetching relish and a good substitute for food. She only went to garden four days out of twenty. On five days Kampamba cooked for her, but when the latter was away, the family did without.

The extent of a headman's hospitality can be seen from the chart on pp. 178–80. The total man-value of those fed by NaMarya varied from 3·6 to 10·8 and the number of eaters was constant on very few days. The seven mourners who came to wail the sudden death of a baby were the headman's responsibility. Honoured guests, 'sons of chiefs', and relatives of Kasaka who arrived on the 14th were given a hut specially cleared for them and a basket of food apart. A Mission teacher appeared on another day and also a stranger, who did formal obeisance in front of the headman's hut. In these circumstances it will be seen that the individual intake of flour varied greatly from day to day, i.e. from 6 lb. per head to 2 lb. The number of meals per day altered with the cooking strength of the group. On three days out of twenty no proper porridge meal was cooked because Kampamba was away doing tribute labour or working with her husband in the bush gardens; on one day Kasaka refused to take his share of the meal because there was not enough for the guests; on four days there was only one meal in the afternoon; on seven days, one meal plus an extra dish of potatoes in the morning, and on the remaining four days, two proper meals. Beer was drunk by the elders of the party on seven days, but not by the children. The figures for this family, therefore, illustrate the irregularity in daily intake due to the tribal system of hospitality and the variation in the number of meals caused by cooking difficulties, but the special problem of this group was its shortage of female labour and the inefficiency of the housewife in charge.

Group B, that of Malalo, provided a perfect example of the expanding ring of interdependent households which may form a matrilocal cooking unit. In the central hut Malalo lived with his wife NaMukonda (B2) and a varying number of his grandchildren, generally Sampa (B13), a boy of 9 and Ruti (B14) a girl, aged 8,

[1] A period of revolt and laziness seems typical of Bemba girls at this age.

262 592 262 574 592 262 592 [883]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

and during the recent locust scourge the villagers whose gardens escaped destruction complained that they were not really better off than their fellows for 'our people come and live with us or beg us for baskets of millet'. But within small limits there is a difference between one housewife and another in her successful management of her grain bin. For one thing, as has been described, she generally cooks roughly the same amount of food however many visitors arrive. The careful housewife also restricts her brewing of beer to necessary occasions, i.e. for a ceremony or a working party, unless she has plenty of millet. Further, there are certain traditionally accepted ways by which she can avoid her tribal obligations. Within limits she can conceal her supplies. The young girls at their initiation ceremonies are in fact taught to hide a little food for their husbands at night, 'to give him the thing which is put by in the dark at night', and I have often seen women take a pot of beer and conceal it in a friend's granary on the reported arrival of some elderly relative. To refuse hospitality with a pot of beer sitting on the hearth would be an impossible insult, but a bland assertion that 'Alas, Sir, we poor wretches (*ifwe balanda*)! We have not a thing to eat here' is sometimes necessary. This would not be done in the case of a near relative, but only with a more distant kinsman of a classificatory type, or one of the well-known 'cadgers' of the family.

Bemba etiquette is also on the side of the housewife, since children are taught from their earliest years never to ask for food except in a near relative's hut, and not to look around a hut or into a granary. In fact, one definition of a witch or a wizard (*umuloshi*) is a person who comes and sits in your house and says, 'I expect you are going to cook soon. What a fine lot of meat you have to-day', or 'I expect the beer will be ready this afternoon', or some such remark. The girl at an initiation ceremony I witnessed was taught to sing a gesture song about a tortoise:

Fulwe pa fyakwe
Aingishyo mukoshi
Mu ci fwambaka;

i.e. 'The tortoise in his own house puts in his neck under his shell' of which the moral is said to be: 'Don't be like the tortoise which shrinks its head into its shell when it is at home, but when it is abroad, (i.e. in somebody else's house) puts its head out and asks for things or peers around.'

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

643 622 651 [647]

so call it, melt away. Besides this, his prestige will gradually go when he is no longer able to carry out his obligations on the same scale as before. The situation has in fact reached a kind of impasse at the moment. Because the *mfumu* gets less labour, he makes smaller gardens and has less food to feed his workers, so that they in their turn are less willing to serve him another year. From figures I collected during my visit it was clear that in some capitals the labourers were getting no food at all in return for their work. The late Nkula employed a hunter, and had a reputation for giving his people meat. Consequently he always seemed able to get work done for him. Sub-chief Lucembe was a hunter himself and lived in good game country. He was therefore in a fortunate position. But Citimukulu sometimes sent men away without food, or gave them one meal in two days, while the women were supposed to bring their own supplies and cook for themselves. Mukuikile, a sub-chief in the Mpika district, fed the men, but not the women. It is clear from these instances that the modern chief is no longer able to carry out his obligations to his people. Those who grumble at the chief's lack of hospitality have reason on their side, but to refuse to do their service as a protest increases the difficulty.

622 576 657 643

As a second result, many chiefs now fail to keep their panel of advisers and councillors at court to transact the necessary tribal business. I have seen the Citimukulu hear cases alone with his clerk, and during 1934 the *bakalolo* summoned by him on important matters of business invariably melted away before the end of the meeting because they had not enough food. It took a period of three months of alternately summoning the council and then dismissing it because of shortage, before the work could be carried through.

622 644 643

Chiefs are also beginning perforce to refuse food to the hungry, and even to their poor relations. In January 1934 Citimukulu gave up the distinction between his *amalasa* granary and his personal one, and fed his wife and family on anything he could lay hands on. The right to take food from the royal mounds (*mputa*) already limited to near relatives, was still further curtailed. In July 1933 I heard the guardian of the Paramount's granary walk round the village at night shouting, 'Listen everyone! Hunger has fallen! No one is to dig up cassava from the chief's *mputa*. If he is hungry let him come to the chief and make obeisance and he will be given something.' It is true that this failure of commissariat occurred during a year when the locusts had done their maximum damage and in

622 657 643

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

241 Sometimes a woman works side by side with her husband, piling up branches as he cuts them from the tree. Both may move out into temporary shelters (*imitanda*) built near their gardens, and live there for some weeks together. But the branches are harder to carry when they are heavy with leaves and green sap, and the Bemba reckon that any but a woman who 'loves her husband',[1] i.e. a specially devoted or newly married wife, would prefer to wait till the boughs have dried! The important thing is to finish the work before the end of the hot weather, when the parched bush often bursts into flame, and fires sweep across the gardens before the *ifibula* have been properly stacked. If the work has been delayed into September the man hurries to help his wife, and both carry in the last branches, stacking together in haste. Laggards are sometimes reduced to making several small gardens (*akakumba*, plur. *utukumba*), instead of one or more large ones, piling the boughs where they have fallen from the trees. With the last branch stacked, the family rest. The women begin to enjoy themselves, [579] and go on a round of visits to friends. The country is covered with circular heaps of dried wood waiting through long sultry days for the firing of the bush.

241 *Firing the gardens* (*ukuoce fibula*). The firing of the *icitemene* is an exciting and important event in the agricultural year. No one may 685 set light to his branches until a special signal has been given by the [643] chief, otherwise one blazing garden might set the whole bush alight and possibly destroy in a day the unstacked branches of countless gardeners. Heavy damages are claimed by a man whose *ifibula* have been burnt before they were ready. In the old days a native who set fire to the bush, whether accidentally or on purpose, had to give up his own *icitemene* in compensation, and if he had destroyed too much property to be able to make the damage good, he became the chief's slave. If the chief's own gardens were burnt, some say the culprit would have been mutilated or beaten; others that he would have been made to work for the chief. Nowadays financial compensation is asked for, and I have records of cases in which sums from 10*s*. to £3. 10*s*. were demanded as a return for what 622 is, after all, the loss of the whole prospect of harvest for the year.

241 The chief must give the signal for the firing of the branches as late as possible in the dry season to give the people time to 643 finish the work, but he must not wait till the rains have fallen

[1] *Aletemwa kuli wiba.*

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Expressed Purposes of the Chisungu

Secondary motives. Apart from such primary considerations, the Bemba, no doubt, have a number of secondary motives. As in the case of other rituals of this type the chisungu is an occasion for entertainment and the meeting of friends and relatives. These are mainly women, but men also visit the chisungu village for the purpose. As we have seen, few of the rites are solemn and a number of them provide opportunities for amusing play-acting, games and solo dancing. Women, in fact, speak of some of the rites as 'just playing'. The festive aspect of the chisungu must have been more marked in the old days when the rites took longer, the supply of food and beer was probably more ample, and the young men of the community were not away at the mines.

A number of Bemba seem consciously to realise that the chisungu is an occasion for the display of social status—the status of the parents of the bride and bridegroom and of the *nacimbusa* herself. At the ceremony I attended the exchange of food was, in Bemba eyes, on a pitiably small scale and, as we saw, Nangoshye constantly complained that she was being insulted by the mean fare cooked for her. Ceremonies in the old days seem to have involved a series of presentations of covered dishes of food (*ukute-beta*), of the kind known as 'honouring the son-in-law' that mark his reception into his bride's village before the chisungu takes place. A written account I obtained of the chisungu in the old days included four such preparations of food besides the porridge of festivity of which I have given an account.

This is a society in which the ceremonial expression of kinship obligations is important, especially in the long process of aggregating a young husband to his wife's village, so it is not unexpected that women should give importance to the chisungu as a centre of attraction for kinsmen. It is probable that much of the six months or so formerly given to the ceremony, was devoted to these ends. A successful and well-run ceremony attracts large crowds and contributes to the prestige of the *nacimbusa* and also to the village in which it is held. The dances provide an opportunity for expressing respect for status, so the *nacimbusa* employs the magic of attraction to make people come to her ceremony. Nangoshye explained that one of her objects in working so hard over the large models of snakes and other objects in the chisungu hut was to get the